Hadley

I stopped hiding it

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**Marc:** This is Hadley’s Insights and Sound Bites, where people facing vision loss share what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Bill:** My name is Bill Hartman. I live in Tampa Bay, Florida, and I have retinitis pigmentosa.

I guess one of the hardest things when I first started losing my sight. I was, and I hear a lot of people tell me this too, you're kind of embarrassed about it, I guess or self-conscious about it. So, you try to hide it from people. And I mean, I did that for years.

And as soon as I stopped doing that and just wasn't trying to hide it anymore, and just would tell people when I met them, like, look, if I miss a handshake or something because I can't see you, it definitely helps, rather than trying to act like you're not.

But once I realized telling people and people support you regardless if you're sighted or not, it wasn't that big of a deal. And it just definitely felt good to get that off my chest without having to worry about that anymore.

If you give people the opportunity to help you, they will. But you just got to give them the opportunity.

When I got the mindset of losing your sight isn't the end of your life, to me, I would just tell myself, okay, I got to figure out how to do this. I got to figure out how to do that. And as you start stacking those little building blocks up and start realizing all this stuff you still can do, it's actually really cool.

**Marc**: You never know who might need to hear your story. If you’d like to share with us, just leave us a message on our Insights & Sound Bites voicemail. By calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can use your smartphone or computer and email us a recording to podcast@HadleyHelps.org.